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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

MAO TSE-TUNG'S DEMOTION

ANY CONCLUSIONS about the "real" reasons behind the fact that Mao Tse-tung, the leader of Communist China, has relinquished his post as chief of state must be tentative. For, as with Communist Russia, what takes place behind the scenes involves large uncertainties. But if one grants that speculation is just that, speculation, and that no single Western observer is in command of sufficient material to reach hard conclusions, the examination of the likely possibilities is not only necessary but useful.

Mao Tse-tung is no longer to be chief of state but he will remain chairman of the Chinese Communist Party as well as chairman of several important councils and bureaus. Does this represent a demotion for him, or does it merely mark a reorganization that will prove helpful to Mao?

There is some reason to think that the former alternative is the case. The retirement as chief of state was announced just when the Western world was learning of the widespread criticism of the communes. While this criticism, which may be only one symptom of deeper dissatisfaction, is not, of course, directed specifically at Mao, it is he who is primarily responsible for the imposition of a communal existence on the traditional family life of the Chinese. It is further true that Mao's prestige could have suffered as the result of other aspects of domestic and foreign policy—his failure to take Quemoy, the economic confusion that has followed the drive to produce more steel, and the sudden shifts in attitude toward public criticism.

All of this is possible, and the initial reaction of Western observers was that it was so. But there is another, quite different possibility which is more persuasive. In this view Mao has indeed retained the reins of power. And the reason behind his retirement as chief of state are those given by the Chinese Central Committee: "Mao Tse-tung will remain at the head of the party and will be able to devote all his efforts to the direction of the policy and the line of the party and the state. He will be able to devote more time to the theoretical study of Marxism-Leninism without being interrupted by the interfering tasks of chief of state."

THE CRITICISMS leveled at the "deficiencies" of Communist China are not, in this view, to be overlooked; but they are seen as the inevitable reaction to the regime's attempt to make "the great leap forward," to extract progress forcibly from the sweat and blood of the Chinese people. Since the criticism was inevitable it was anticipated and prepared for by Mao and the other Chinese leaders.

Nor is it surprising that Mao should see himself as a Marxist theoretician. He has, before now, put himself forward as a formulator of policy. If, then, he extends his role of theoretician, and Communist China proves reasonably successful in industrializing itself, Mao will have a strong position not only within Communist China but within the entire Communist orbit. If this happens there can be no doubt that China will be regarded as leader by the underdeveloped countries of Africa and Asia. That such a prospect must be unsettling to Mr. Khrushchev and the other Russian leaders there can be no doubt. Nor is there any doubt that such a consequence should have profound influence on U.S. foreign policy.

Were Mao's decision to concentrate his efforts the result of inner tension and ferment within China there could be some reason for optimism on our part. This would suggest—as many people are eager to believe—that the regime is uncertain and unstable and could be swept aside by popular revolt. Were this the case we could continue our

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present policy, and confidently await the eventual collapse of the Communist regime.

It is more realistic, however, to assume that the Chinese leaders know what they are about, how much repression the people will stand, how much they will respond to even small advances, and how much they desire to assert their place in the world of nations. Merely by virtue of economic advances Russia is, in some ways, closer to the United States than to China and the underdeveloped countries. And if China can approach the goals it has set for itself, the underdeveloped countries may believe they have a new spokesman. And they certainly will unless another country shows that it truly has a greater interest in their welfare. It is up to the leaders of the United States to decide if America wishes to be that country.

FAMILY FIGHT

EISENHOWER REPUBLICANS in the Senate, led by Senators Aiken of Vermont and Cooper of Kentucky, want a new deal, and who can blame them? November's election results were hardly encouraging for the G.O.P. as a whole, but for the Old Guard the returns represented disaster.

Senator Knowland, leading symbol of and spokesman for conservative Republicanism, suffered a crushing defeat in his race for Governor in California. Such right-wing stalwarts and long-term Capitol fixtures as Senators Bricker of Ohio and Malone of Nevada will be conspicuously absent from Washington this year, along with Senator Jenner of Indiana, who retired without trying for re-election. Liberal Republicans can claim with considerable justification that almost the only G.O.P. candidates to survive the Democratic sweep were those called, variously, "liberal," "progressive," "modern" or "Eisenhower Republicans."

NEXT WEEK

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON writes about Christianity and the expansion of Western civilization.

"In reading the history of the geographical expansion of Christianity . . . at every stage we must ask, what was it that spread? By what processes did it spread? What effect did it have on its new environment and vice versa?"

Despite November, however, G.O.P. leadership remains unchanged and unchanging. The head of the G.O.P. policy committee is still Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, a conservative, and the man scheduled to replace Senator Knowland as Republican floor leader is the incomparable Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois. Since the public forms much of its image of the Party from the day-to-day statements of its leaders in Congress, the desire of at least ten of the thirty-four Republican Senators to elect someone like John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky as their spokesman is understandable.

There is, too, the question of committee assignments. The liberal Senators want G.O.P. chieftains to follow the Democratic example and relax seniority rules in handing out these posts. As things stand now, most good committee assignments go to older Senators, while the younger and usually more liberal men draw relatively minor assignments which keep them out of the public's view. Thus Senator Bridges himself is a member of two major committees, Appropriations and Armed Forces, while Eisenhower Republican Senator Javits of New York serves only on minor committees—e.g., the Joint Committee on Printing. The ten rebels do not want first choice; they ask only that every Republican get one good committee assignment before any Senator gets a chance at two. That way, they reason, individual Senators would get to show their abilities and the people would have the opportunity between elections to see something of liberal as well as conservative Republicans.

So far the Eisenhower Republicans are getting no help from the White House, but there is nothing surprising about this. For some reason known only to himself, President Eisenhower has never done much to bolster the prestige or power of those Republicans identified with his wing of the Party, despite the fact that often enough only their support has kept his program from defeat by a coalition of conservative Republicans and Southern Democrats. With only two years left in office, Mr. Eisenhower is unlikely to change tactics now. At this writing, then, the chances for the liberal Republicans to win their battle seem slight. Yet the hardy little band is determined to carry on the fight because they are convinced, as Senator Aiken put it, that they "have everything to gain and nothing to lose by making our fight for a forward-looking leadership. . . . If we are defeated, the Party can look forward to further reversals in the 1960 elections."

Analysis of last November's voting seems to bear out the argument made by Senator Aiken and

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his liberal colleagues. Indeed, the only thing wrong with the present efforts of the Eisenhower Republicans is that they come about six years too late.

AMERICA'S SPUTNIK

TO THE SUCCESSFUL long-range flight to target of an Atlas missile, cited in these columns two weeks ago, should now be added the launching and placing into orbit of the four and one-half-ton Atlas satellite—barely fourteen months after the first Soviet sputnik. The size alone of the new American satellite would indicate that the United States is appreciably closer to being on equal terms with the Soviet Union in these accomplishments. But the fact that our satellite zoomed unerringly into its designated orbit, and the way it beamed and relayed President Eisenhower's message of peace to the world, open up a whole new range of possibilities.

Apparently a perilous gap has been bridged; the people of the world should breathe easier for it. Space flights and intercontinental ballistic missiles present a different problem now. There is more of a balance. The United States need no longer feel that we are negotiating in these matters from a marked position of weakness. But these developments confront the world with a problem, one that intensifies as the various potentialities of missiles and satellites become more clearly seen.

AFRICA ON THE MARCH

THE SPEED with which the Dark Continent is changing was brought out in dispatches from the All-African People's Conference at Accra, capital of the newly independent Ghana. Two hundred and fifty delegates from twenty-eight nations were on hand for proceedings which ranged from fiery anti-Western speechmaking to final resolutions which allowed for the non-violent approach of certain leaders. The give and take of the conference pointed up a number of inherent obstacles to national and continental aspirations.

The tension between ardent anti-colonialism and residual friendly feelings for the West is a real one. Certain African leaders are fully aware of the contributions colonial powers are making today to the economic development of their nations, and the health, education and political maturing of their peoples. Many, however, will not, or cannot, rest content with a gradual upward march which would often be more soundly based than sudden and ill-prepared political and economic emancipation. Demands for wholesale and immediate independence are clearly on the increase. Racial persecution by the Union of South Africa acts as a constant thorn which incites other native Africans against their present or former colonial overlords.

Back of all these resentments and aspirations are complexities compounded upon such age-old blights as illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and disease. There is a tendency for the greatest native political development to take place in the most underdeveloped, impoverished African lands, which makes for terrific social tensions and a readiness to accept aid from any quarter. And where modernization has gone farthest there is a desperate effort to maintain racial barriers.

And of the many factors required for economic development on the scale the African people now require, one of the most difficult to come by is adequate personnel—both teachers and administrators from industrialized countries and skilled native personnel. This lack can stop the best of programs in its tracks. The unsettled political relationships themselves make economic planning highly precarious. And where *apartheid* reigns there is no possibility of any real progress.

Probably no other sector of the globe today better exemplifies the crisis in colonialism. The London *Economist,* for example, concludes its recent comprehensive survey of the problem: "If a welter of racial antagonism and economic disruption . . . awaits the peoples of Africa and turns them at last away from the West, the judgment of history will record that men of European stock, Western culture and Christian religion, at the height of their power and prestige, could not be trusted with the fate of a vast, innocent and defenseless continent."

IGNORANCE IS BLISS DEPT.

LAST WEEK, in commenting on the effects of the newspaper strike in New York, we remarked that we did not even know what movies were showing at the neighborhood theater. Since then a friend has repaired this gap in our knowledge, and now we're sorry we brought the subject up in the first place. The features: "I Married a Monster from Outer Space" and "The Blob." Next week: "The Spider" ("It Crawls, It Creeps"). Our present plans, moviewise, call for us to crawl (or creep) right on by.

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The Paradox of Affluence

The Galbraith thesis directly challenges the aspirations of American civilization and vitally affects the strategy of our contest with Communism

by EDWARD T. CHASE

A RARE EVENT of the utmost consequence is taking place, the formulation of a new idea among "the worldly philosophers," the economists. It is a big idea, spilling over from economics into sociology, the biggest in its field since John Maynard Keynes' *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* twenty-odd years back. It directly challenges the aspirations of American civilization. It affects the strategy of our contest with Communism for the world. Furthermore, if the idea continues its spectacular proselytizing success it could mark a crucial shift by us away from the ideal of an ever-expanding economy—the one goal we and the Soviet have both accorded absolute priority—to an altogether new approach to the purposes of production. Already we are beginning to see the onset of a great national debate that promises to dominate much discussion in the immediate years ahead.

To interpret and judge this new idea, and to ascertain its implications for public policy, it is best first to stalk it indirectly. Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev recently presented to a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and two days later to the world, an economic expansion plan conceived as the final knock-out blow to the West.

Its terms far surpass all previous Soviet plans, for it calls for an increase in gross industrial production of 80 per cent in the next seven years. By 1965, if all goes according to schedule, the Communist bloc is to have greater production than the rest of the world combined. Furthermore, by 1970, asserted Mr. Khrushchev, because of this production, the Soviet will have the highest living standard in the world and be out-producing the United States both absolutely and on a per capita basis.

Mr. Chase, a frequent contributor, writes on cultural and socio-economic questions for this and other magazines.

No responsible Western observer has discounted the seriousness of this challenge. Announcement of the plan has been widely evaluated as the most significant development in foreign affairs in the post-war epoch. Among other threats it poses is that the uncommitted peoples, the underdeveloped and the neutralists, may be so profoundly impressed by this "up from the bootstraps" achievement of Russia that the West may suffer decisively in prestige. And such a reaction would have profound effects in the cold war.

Walter Lippmann, after his Kremlin interview with Khrushchev, made the point that the present example of American productivity and prosperity is unpersuasive to the underdeveloped countries since it reflects our exploitation of unmatched natural resources. In any event, our affluence was not attained overnight, as that of the Communists will be according to their plans, nor does our free market system seem a practicable system to these largely unskilled and impoverished peoples.

FOLLOWING up this report, Mr. Lippmann wrote an extraordinary column interpreting the American election entitled "The Incoming Tide." In this piece he commented on President Eisenhower's remark that the people had voted for "spenders." The position he then went on to develop was that the great victory of Nelson Rockefeller and of the Democrats represented "the growing conviction, based on personal experience of living in countless American communities, that our public needs are not being adequately met." What was extraordinary about this piece was the sweeping nature of the indictment Mr. Lippmann made of American civilization and his linking this so positively to his interpretation of the election results. Almost equally noteworthy was the fact that the heart of his column was a nearly verbatim exposition of the

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doctrine of John Kenneth Galbraith in his best seller, *The Affluent Society*.

Now Mr. Lippmann may or may not be one's cup of tea. But it is important that so popular an opinion-former should echo the radical argument of *The Affluent Society*. It reflects the pervasiveness of this doctrine and the fact that it has entered the arena of national public debate. It is important, yet it is not surprising. *The Affluent Society* is already established as a literary phenomenon of our time, being a hotly discussed national best seller for many weeks now and the first serious economic treatise to accomplish this within living memory. The Galbraith concept is getting around. The other day one of organized labor's principal advisors, Arthur J. Goldberg, counsel to the A.F.L.-C.I.O., in a major statement noting our deteriorating labor-management relations, proposed formation of a new kind of labor-management assembly to discuss basic issues. Mr. Goldberg suggested among the topics for discussion "inflation, automation, and perhaps the thesis of 'an affluent society' that may be too preoccupied for its own good with ever-increasing industrial output." Both here and in England the book has been acclaimed, and not only by popular commentators but by widely respected economists.

What are we to make of this development? The book's major thesis, that we in America have won the production battle, that we will persevere in our fixation with an ever rising Gross National Product at our peril, that the grave imbalance between our private affluence and public poverty is a result of this, as is the apparently uncontrollable inflation that infects our economy —this argument contradicts the standard line of every economist of consequence in the nation. Nor has the directly conflicting nature of Professor Galbraith's challenge been lost upon our principal advisers. Former Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, economist Leon H. Keyserling, has retorted with a plea entitled, "Next Step—A 600 Billion Dollar Economy" in which he disputes Galbraith's thesis and recommends a seven-year plan of his own that prescribes steps insuring an average annual rate of productive expansion of five per cent, the conventional figure also urged in the recent celebrated Rockefeller Brothers Fund report on the future of the American economy.

The key to this paradox—the nearly universal acclaim for *The Affluent Society* though it demolishes some of our most cherished assumptions, what Galbraith calls "the conventional wisdom"—is that the book expresses with great felicity, first, our ever more widespread but largely unformulated revulsion for the proliferation of unessential, trivial, shoddy goods and services that are lumped under that sacred absolute, the G. N. P. (gross national product); and, secondly, our growing dismay over our pitiful inadequacies in public goods and services, such as education, transportation, medical facilities, parks and housing, in contrast with this plethora of private luxuries.

But perceptive social critics have been documenting this with a vengeance of late, for example Russell Lynes in his book *A Surfeit of Honey*, David Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd* and his essay *Abundance for What?* Daniel Bell in *Work and its Discontents*, C. Wright Mills in *The Power Elite*, W. H. Whyte, Jr. in *Exploding Metropolis* and *The Organization Man*, Wyatt Marrs in *Man on Your Back*, David Potter in *People of Abundance*, not to mention the many acid if generally superficial attacks on Madison Avenue and advertising, and books like John Keats' *The Insolent Chariots*. Indeed it is this cumulative offensive by the disaffected intellectuals which has prepared the ground for Galbraith. He struck at precisely the right moment.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES Galbraith's work is that for the first time this profound sense of deficiencies in America's "statistical Utopia" is given a comprehensive framework in economic fact and theory. We respond with a great shock of recognition to Galbraith's witty and telling pinpointing of absurdities and vulgarities in our system. Perhaps in our enthusiasm for the rightness of his sensibility, however, we accept too easily the assumptions and interpretations that make up his economic theory.

In light of the Soviet seven-year plan and the realization that we are surely entering the crucial phase of the struggle for mankind's allegiance, it is no minor matter how we plan to order our economy, dispose of our not unlimited resources, cope with inflation, orient our production facilities, finance public services and control unemployment. Galbraith's eclectic approach, at once indifferent to the orthodoxies of either the right or the left, at the very least represents a blockbuster to the conventional approach of American business, with its incessant stress on ever more production. And let us not forget that business is the commanding dynamic in our socio-economic life.

Though he develops his argument with infinite care, full of striking and often subtle detail that cannot be covered in this essay, Galbraith's theme is essentially simple. Our dedication to production derives from the central premise of all economic theories, namely, that man is in an eternal struggle against scarcity. Seemingly unaware that our affluent society has progressed beyond this state, we continue to bend our energies to an ever expanding economy but now we do so primarily to provide full employment and to ameliorate inequality. This full-employment, all-out economy in turn accounts for a perpetual inflation. The production effort, furthermore, is sustained not by genuine needs, all long since fulfilled except in special

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"case" poverty (i.e. the Ozarks), but by frivolities, contrived needs created by advertising and salesmanship.

One pernicious effect of this is a dangerous volume of consumer debt. What is new in our era, says Galbraith, is this feature, built into the productive system itself, of synthesizing new "wants," a development he calls "the dependence effect." Now the real defect in our ideology is that only personal affluence is rated as wealth, as "our standard of living"; public goods and services are not part of our profit-motive production system but instead constitute a burden sustained, grudgingly, by taxation, traditionally viewed by business as a threat to affluence. The consequence is a grievous imbalance between our private wealth and our vastly undernourished public services. Mr. Galbraith demolishes the rationalization that this unstinting effort to swell the torrent of production is necessary to our military security—rather superfluously, it so happens, now that we have the lesson of Russian sputnik and missile superiority.

MR. GALBRAITH'S main positive recommendations (the book is deliberately "destructive," the author abhorring this era of "the bland leading the bland") are two: First, to deal with unemployment (and indirectly with inflation) he proposes a cyclically graduated unemployment benefit system, which would provide for a proportionate increase in the size of benefits, approaching the average weekly wage level, as unemployment rolls grow, a diminution in benefits as full employment is approached and jobs are quick to come by.

Secondly, in order to raise revenue needed for public services he proposes a great extension of sales taxes to tap our near-universal private affluence. Both remedies are presented with overwhelming cogency. Finally, he demonstrates, rather less cogently, that our society is already evolving a "new class" with a new philosophy toward work, people more interested in rewarding careers than in income, a culture with greater investment in education, shorter working hours, more meaningful leisure activities and fewer old and young in the production force itself.

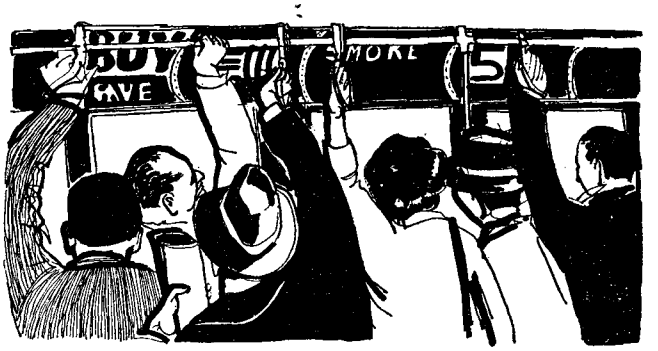
Modern history is replete with evidence of the truth of Lord Keynes' dictum that "the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist." It is important, then, that grave questions are raised and unmet by Professor Galbraith, which is inevitable in a book so sweeping in its scope. He has delivered a devastating attack on American materialism and the aberrated scale of values that lumps together mouth wash and Salk vaccine as equally qualified for inclusion in the sacrosanct G.N.P. He thus indicts the mindless tyranny of private consumer choice (synthesized and adulterated by Madison Avenue) determining the structure of our whole production system and underscores the need for collective action to meet vital collective needs.

Who is to call the tune in the area of public needs then? Obviously governmental authority, we trust freely chosen. Yet can we really be so assured that government bureaucracy, even when fortified by the ample funds raised by Professor Galbraith's sales tax method, will carry out the necessary tasks to redress the impoverishment in public goods and services? The answer is probably yes, especially as a greater investment in education strengthens the "new class" Galbraith sees emerging and provides a more sophisticated electorate.

But we see that he has posed for us once again the basic issue of today, the proper reconcilement of freedom and security. It is a pity Professor Galbraith could not have pursued this topic. For if meanly interpreted, *The Affluent Society* could rationalize the practicality of a totalitarian solution to our problems. At the least, it seems to this observer, the book presents substantial ammunition for socialism, though Professor Galbraith at no time presents his position in the context of the debate over socialism.

FINALLY, even though *The Affluent Society* is an analysis of an economic pattern rather than of a specific socio-political situation, it remains quite curious that the author hardly considers the relationship of this affluent society of ours with the world's two billion non-Americans still facing scarcity. The domestic political issues of the next decade or so (as we have seen) are surely comprehended by the discourse of this book. Among international political issues disarmament may head the list, but certainly high in priority will be this question of how the production of the affluent can be brought to the underprivileged peoples. A full inquiry into this question might quite possibly have materially modified the author's strictures on our obsession with production.

The Galbraith analysis is, on the whole, inexorable,



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and one is buoyed up by the discourse of this forthright man with his wit and his display of logic on page after page. Yet the greatest weapon in Galbraith's arsenal is outside the book itself: it is the force of circumstance, which is to say that *The Affluent Society* is timely. Today every major examination of America's situation—whether by the Rockefeller Fund, The Committee for Economic Development, The A.D.A., the U. S. Chamber of Commerce—finds our greatest problems to be deficiencies in our public environment: specifically, four—the breakdown in the services and amenities of our urban complexes, where our booming population now overwhelmingly resides; the crisis in transportation and in education; and the distress and upheaval in our agricultural life.

All interrelate; all are inextricably bound up with the question of imbalance between public and private goods and services and the purposes of production. Hence the sharp relevance of Mr. Lippmann's insight that here lie the political issues of the fifties and sixties, the lessons of the recent elections, and that recognition of this is the last chance for the Republican party to remain a major or even an effective political force. Professor Galbraith has illuminated the questions and challenges involved in this as no one else in our time by virtue of casting this in a socio-economic analysis rather than by sheer exhortation. His is potent new doctrine, and he has potent adherents among the opinion makers who are increasingly vocal about their disgust with America's mass culture.

CHRISTMAS IN EXILE

Magi from Teruel

by JOSÉ MARÍA GIRONELLA

AFTER KNOWING and dealing at length with Spanish exiles in France, a Spaniard coming from Spain must inevitably conclude that the souls of most of them remain in Spain. Whatever their luck has been, Spain—with rare exceptions among them—is their obsession, an obsession not always kindly in nature. They seem to feel a mysterious dependence, a sentiment not easily understandable to people who have never left their native soil. Perhaps their attraction is of the kind that lava might feel for the volcano that has hurled it abroad.

Naturally the drama unfolds differently according to the age, temperament and family circumstances of the exile; and it depends even more on the region of Spain he left behind. Time and distance do not bite in the same way or leave the same teeth marks upon a Basque and an Andaluz, a Catalan and a man from Madrid. Some among them hold to their native tongue with fierce pride—after twenty years in France they refuse to say so much as *"pommes de terre"*; others are more reasonable, or indifferent, in matters of speech, but stick to their provincial way of dressing. Some sing away their nostalgia, others pound on the pavement with their canes.

I should like to present here, by way of illustration, a married couple, still young enough, natives of Teruel, in Aragón, with whom I had many dealings when I lived in Paris in the late 1940's. They still called the French gendarmes by an Aragonese slang word meaning "little brothers" or more simply "crooks." They had met each other for the first time in a concentration camp. In 1942 they were married in Toulouse, and a girl and a boy had been born to them since. After the war they had wandered about Germany, where they had been taken in the labor draft. Then they had settled down in Paris, where they reside at present, leading an apparently everyday life, neither victors nor victims.

I met them in 1949 and felt a great affection for them from the first moment. They had found themselves a modest apartment in the area around the Porte Saint-Denis near Réaumur-Sébastopol. The man was a mason and there was always a touch of plaster around his eyelids; the woman passed the hours singing Aragonese *jotas* in a piercing voice. Their life was characterized by passion and fanaticism, and in consequence was filled with paradox and unreality. They were sick and they despised doctors. They disliked the landscape of the Ile-de-France and they had bought themselves a tandem bicycle in order to explore it. In the dining room, facing a splendid portrait of Azana, President of the Spanish Republic during the Civil War, hung a luminous effigy of the Virgin of Pilar, the patroness of Saragossa. Short of stature and slow of gait, the pair were as prone to talk in terms of immensities —the sky of Spain, the size of Russia, the snowfall

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José María Gironella is the well-known author of *The Cypresses Believe in God*. This reminiscence was translated by Anthony Kerrigan.

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that blanketed the battle of Teruel—as they were to spend hours disputing over the merest trifles.

Under the influence of their parents' contradictory temperaments, the nightlong discussions carried on in their flat with other exiles, the ingenuous and innocent madness of that house, the children grew up with a chimerical light in their eyes. They laughed continuously and said surprising things. Of Spain they had the most hallucinatory and fantastic idea. Spain for them—who had been born in Toulouse—was a faraway land where the inhabitants, instead of tandem bicycles, used wings; a hallowed land, since it was their father's and mother's, where sunshine warmed the heart through the night after having done so all day; where the children were all marvels and champions of some sort, and the girls jumped rope with greater grace than the French girls. Teruel, in their minds, was a city perhaps smaller than Paris, but more densely populated and with brighter windows. Before the Civil War, Spain had been the land of dreams.

TOWARDS THE END of the year 1949, I visited the family to wish them a happy Christmas season. I strolled about the flat with them, and then I asked them how it happened that people with such a strong sense of tradition had neglected to build a Christmas crèche. The father pushed back his beret and answered that he did not believe in such humbug.

"On the other hand," he said, looking toward the children, "we do believe in the Three Kings."

"Vaya por Dios! How do you manage to conceive of the Magi without believing in the existence of the cave at Bethlehem, and of the Star in the East. . . .?"

The wife smiled. *Their* Magi had nothing to do with the cave or with the Star. The Three Kings did not come from the East but . . . from Teruel! And they brought toys and things from Spain for all the children of all the Spanish exiles scattered throughout the world.

The idea moved me; one more, among so many others, of the ideas held to by this family moved me. Amused, I glanced at the girl and boy and saw that, true enough, they were at that moment busy writing the pertinent letters.

"What mailbox will they post them in?" I inquired. "The one at the Spanish Consulate?"

The husband, an old-time militant Socialist, smiled wryly.

"Nothing of the sort! They'll post them at the Spanish church on Rue de la Pompe."

"What . . . ?"

The wife explained to me that one of the "fathers" at that church was in charge of bringing the toys the children asked for from Spain: parchesi sets (Spanish, not French), yo-yos, nougat from Jijona. . . .

I realized that everything was perfectly organized. It was organized to such a point that on the fifth of January, on the eve of the Day of the Kings, the family would go out into the streets of Paris to seek out Their Majesties.

I was unable to overcome my astonishment.

"And of course," they announced in a duo, "you must come with us."

Why not! To tell the truth, it would have been slow-witted of me to refuse. For the ceremony was truly impressive. The very Parisians, the sophisticated Parisians, rubbed their eyes. On the fifth of January, on the eve of Epiphany, the inhabitants of the *quartier* de la Pompe saw, toward nightfall, a strange procession which advanced along the sidewalk beneath a tenuous and hesitant rain; a boy and a girl, each one bearing a paper lantern, two parents, with their own lanterns, and, bringing up the rear of the retinue, a lone man, without a partner, the lapels of his overcoat turned up, and carrying his own paper lantern. I was the lone man.

People stopped to look at us, and this only stimulated the married couple and their children, so much so that as we passed in front of the church of the Rue de la Pompe, they began to sing with great enthusiasm:

The Three Kings
from Teruel
are bringing toys
and all sweet things.

I found myself joining in; and soon we moved on together. Then, as we neared Passy, from behind a window three faces suddenly appeared: the Three Kings. One was white-haired, a second blond, and a third was dark-haired and dark-skinned: the last wore a fabulous crown atop his head.

When they caught sight of them, the children grew panicky and shied away. The father turned to me:

"They're friends of ours, exiles. What a row!" And he added: "The white-haired one was with the U.G.T. [*Union General del Trabajo,* a Socialist labor union founded in 1888, eventually largely captured by the Communists; now banned in Spain but maintaining an organization in exile and an underground in Spain]; I think you know him. The blond was also with the U.G.T. The dark one is from the F.A.I." [*Federación Anarquista Ibérica,* the anarchist political organ of Spanish trade union movement. Like the U.G.T., it maintains its organization in exile.]

Magnificent, by my faith! They were all playing at metamorphosizing themselves into Spain. The anarchist from the F.A.I. had exchanged the red kerchief around his collar for a royal crown, a Bourbon crown. The white-haired King exhibited a Manila shawl slung gracefully over his left shoulder. The blond cried out: *"Viva Aragón!"* All of us, with our paper lanterns, provided Paris with a patch of southern light, an intimation of the eve of Epiphany in Spain.

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Has Kerouac made a contribution to American literature?

King of the Beats

by SEYMOUR KRIM

WITH EACH passing book Jack Kerouac begins to come down to earth a little more, to reveal what he's made of and allow for some practical judgments. There has been such a gossip campaign about our so-called wild man, the King of the Beats, that ordinarily serious literary people have come to assume a fighting stance (either for or against) that has little to do with Kerouac's actual performance.

Let us take a look at his newest book, *The Dharma Bums* (Viking. $3.95.), before trying to generalize. Once again Kerouac is writing in the first person—a transparent autobiographical device, calling himself Ray Smith where before he wore the dream-names of Sal Paradise and Leo Percipied—and the scene of the book is the San Francisco-Berkeley area where the young beats live a kind of Ashcan School type of life, sparked up with wine and the bed. It is essentially the same Kerouac environment that was pictured in the first two books of his current spurt; the only truly new arrival on the scene is Zen, and a good deal of the dialogue and the references play around with Buddhist notions.

Ray Smith, the hero of the present chapter in Kerouac's non-stop gush (and each of the three novels that have recently been published are mere episodes in the unwinding scroll of his experience) adds mountain-climbing and meditation to the typical Kerouacian staple of batting madly around the country. In a sense, this book is gentler and less pretentious than both *On the Road* and *The Subterraneans;* Kerouac-Smith is in a more thoughtful and introspective mood than previously, and spends much time by himself digging the beauties and possibilities of nature. A genuine pastoral charm can be found in the *Bums,* and it is quite refreshing until it becomes overdone. But although this new facet of Kerouac's sensitivity has been seized upon by some conventional critics who couldn't see what all the fuss was about before, Kerouac's sensuous response to nature should not be hoisted high as proof that he is a good boy after all, wholesome and bracketable.

That's too easy: witness the fact that it enabled Mr. J. Donald Adams to hop on the Kerouac Lambretta with some fulsome verbiage about Kerouac's being the finest nature writer since Hemingway (which is untrue) and altogether dodging the other implications in the work (which formerly caused Adams to consign Kerouac to the noisome pit). Kerouac's back-to-nature theme in the present book is obviously part of his total drive for a direct, vitalistic marriage with reality in all its senses. Literary teetotalers and nice old ladies who now pat Kerouac's head kindly because he celebrates the birds and bees forget that he loves (but loves, man!) his booze and sex as much as ever; his next book may very well revive the original horror and condemnation.

THE MOST widely quoted reviews of *On The Road* compared Kerouac to Thomas Wolfe as a rolling, roaring, all-American type of prose bard. As his writing now tumbles out into book form (rumor has it that Kerouac has at least six already-written books waiting for publishers), we can see that this original comparison was misleading. Kerouac does not have the classic verbal equipment or majesty of Wolfe at his best, and anyone who goes to his books looking for the same thrilling bombast won't find it. As a handler of words, Kerouac is often careless and slangy, the language often dripping colorlessly into an undifferentiated puddle. And in this latest book we see that the writing is thin as well, with none of the rotundity or resonance that the Wolfe-Whitman comparisons implied.

I think it is illuminating to poke into his actual prose itself because so much hazy misinformation has found its way into the press concerning it. The most interesting writing of Kerouac's three recent books can be found in *The Subterraneans,* where the sentences are thick, clotted, almost unreadable in their fidelity to what the "I" experiences, down to the most hair-fine detail. I have been told that this is the only one of Kerouac's books that has not been edited; and it shows in the final tediousness of the writing and, more importantly, in the attempt on Kerouac's part to tell *all* about his painful affair with a young colored girl. It is a strong and vivid piece of writing, one that

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stays in the mind like a burr, but it also points up the recklessness of his method of composition and, probably, his entire philosophy. This is important, I think, because Kerouac's virtues and excesses are yoked very tightly, almost inseparably, together.

After publishing the semi-conventional *The Town and The City* in his late twenties, Kerouac (now thirty-six) felt a dissatisfaction with the academic notion of the novel-form; he turned his back on every falsity that he felt in the made-up, "fictional" conception of the novel, carried over from the nineteenth century and embalmed in the universities, and tried to find a form that was more on a level with his actual experience. With much fumbling, he at last hit upon what his buddy Allen Ginsberg, the young howling poet, has described a little pretentiously as "spontaneous bop prosody." Broken down, this means completely spontaneous composition with none of the super-ego restraints formerly enjoined upon the writer; and also, very important to the method, *no rewriting* once the original words and the shape of sentences are first cast by the mind.

Kerouac's "bop prosody" represented a breakthrough for him as a writer which should be appreciated even if one has doubts about the method: it enabled him to express his experience with much greater accuracy and reality than if he still wore around his neck what he felt as heavy stones of "responsibility" and "literature." The bulk of highbrow young writers Kerouac's own age were strangling themselves, he believed, with grueling and ultra-sober notions of "wit," "tension," "density" and "complexity" in writing—a set of catchwords coming out of the New Criticism and the high-powered little magazines. All this seemed falsely over-intellectual and forced to Kerouac and his band of guerrillas. Writing, they thought, loses all of its value to the individual if it has to be put through such a grotesquely convoluted process. Kerouac felt he had to return to the primary reality of his experience and forget the consequences; otherwise he could never have gotten under way and reached a pitch in his faith and certainty where he could really "let go" with some of the actuality that he had undergone. Thus Kerouac's "rhythm writing"—no censoring, no rationalizing, no tampering with the flow—was a most drammatic counterpart to the kind of statically intellectual work he felt was slowing down the literary scene. He wanted to tear open all the vents of being and let the actual thought at the moment it was conceived drop upon the page without apology.

IN THIS Kerouac wasn't without precedent, of course. It is an ancient artistic notion, and in our time Jackson Pollock of the so-called "action painters" of the abstract expressionist group had reached comparable conclusions and John Cage done similar things in music. But in Kerouac's case, especially after the publication of *On The Road* (which was edited and cleaned up by Viking before being offered to the public) a barrage of moral criticism was leveled at him which artists like Pollock and Cage never had to cope with. Because the work of these two men is abstract, critics could wrangle about the method but the ambiguity of the content presented a challenge which had to be brooded upon. But in Kerouac's case people hardly noticed the method because the life he seemed to glorify—promiscuity, pot-smoking, the hot pursuit of speed, kicks, excitement—was so much more tangible than "art." What was particularly refreshing or shocking about Kerouac's content (depending on the readers) was that he brought out into the open—could not help doing so, once committed to his method—some facts about contemporary American life which don't find their way into the Sunday *Times,* for instance, because they aren't the kind of news thought fit enough to print.

The life Kerouac writes about may be judged to be "good" or "bad" or "destructive"; unquestionably it foams over with confusion and waste, but then so does our national scene. And there is the objective fact that many young people—often quite gifted ones, in the sense of creativity, response to experience, trying to think for themselves—are living a life similar to the kind that Kerouac writes about. What once was the inner circle of bohemia has expanded its values through modern jazz and the dissemination of avant garde art of all kinds to the very gates of the middle-class, and if you leaf through the men's magazines today you will see that the so-called bohemian values have now become a part of American life; the dividing-line separating the bearded, horn-rimmed types from our former images of bourgeois respectability seems not so sharp anymore. Many Americans seem to be living, or as Kerouac would perhaps more honestly say, trying to make it, on this same screwy scene.

Thus I believe that Kerouac, by throwing over the literary restraints, has succeeded in letting some of the real experience of our decade escape into his pages in crude, free-swinging, even shapeless form. Unlike most of his contemporaries, who haven't been spared a similar life, Kerouac doesn't apologize for his pursuit of pleasure; he refuses to look down on his experience or to measure it against any ideal. He is determined simply to find joy in his life, even at extravagant cost and risk.

What sets Kerouac apart from the "writer writers," and makes his voice carry despite its comparative frailty and childishness, is that he has the courage to put down the unaccustomed rhythm and details of the frantic modern scene exactly the way he's lived it. This may not be a literary achievement which will survive beyond the present. But can we be sure what will?

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SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR

I HAVE A SUGGESTION for all Catholic teachers, preachers, apologists and writers. I suggest that in 1959, the phrase "error has no rights" be finally buried. The phrase, which was always meaningless, deserves quick interment in unconsecrated ground. It has been responsible for more bad thinking, confusion and intolerance than any combination of words since "cuius regio, eius religio," and it reveals the same blithe disregard for individual conscience.

Truth and error are abstractions. Rights, like duties, belong exclusively to persons, as Catholic apologists quickly remind us whenever rights are mistakenly attributed to brute animals. The phrase "error has no rights" is a verbal monstrosity.

* * *

Here is a suggestion for some well-meaning friends. Please forget the phrase "liberal Catholic." The words are used as if they were defining a special kind of Catholic rather than a special kind of liberal. They are usually not very well received by those they are meant to honor, for they suggest that the "liberal Catholic's" religious orthodoxy is questionable and his loyalty to the Faith is not all it should be. The term also suggests that the things you like about the "liberals" exist in spite of, rather than because of, their belief in Catholicism.

* * *

For some religious controversialists. It would be nice if we heard "Is it a Church or a State?" for the last time. It is not really the devastating either/or you seem to think it is. Catholic Christianity is an ancient worldwide faith, and it is sheer provincialism to speak of it as if it were a fly-by-night sect. Vatican City is a tiny sovereign state. It has been that since 1929 when the famous Roman Question was settled. By this settlement, the Church and the Pope were assured of political independence.

I suspect that if tomorrow the Pope were made subservient to the rulers of Italy you would be the first to complain that American Catholics were religiously subject to an Italian citizen.

The Church would of course continue to exist with or without Vatican City. At most the sovereignty of the papal headquarters is a convenience. But if Vatican City were dissolved tomorrow, your difficulties with Catholicism would still remain. In fact, they would probably be compounded.

* * *

"Liberty is not license"—here is another tried-and-true conversation-stopper that deserves a rest. Everybody's liberty is somebody else's license, and vice versa. The question of whether a given act represents genuine liberty or outrageous license is a personal question which each man, guided by the teachings of his Church or the promptings of his own conscience, has to settle for himself. As far as the civil law goes, it is not a question to be solved by philosophers, theologians or religious spokesmen. It is a question to be solved by the law of the land and those charged with interpreting it. The law of the land permits all kinds of licentious liberties. Heavy moralizing about liberty and license is almost always beside the point in civil-liberties cases. It presumes a simple transference from the moral to the legal order which is contrary to all sound principles of jurisprudence.

* * *

"The Church has always avoided the twin extremes of militarism and pacifism." At almost every serious consideration of the morality of modern war, somebody tries to settle the complicated question with this resoundingly simple truism. Unfortunately it usually settles more than the question—it settles the audience right back into its usual lethargy about the most pressing ethical issue of the day.

No one can dispute the historicity of the statement; everyone, however, can seriously question its true relevance, as it is usually used. If one wants to follow up the statement by arguing that our present preparations for Armaggedon also promise to avoid the extremes of pacifism and militarism, the statement may have point. But if a speaker is not willing to go that far—and very few are—then he should not be permitted to don the flattering robes of moderation. Let him, rather, deal with the real problems of modern war and he will find himself involved with extremities in no time.

* * *

"I don't always agree with you, but I am pleased to meet you anyway." This is an opening remark that people who are likely to meet Commonweal writers and editors at social gatherings might well forego—and no one would be the worse off.

Of course you do not always agree; it goes without saying. No one expects you to agree; no one would want you to. It is taken for granted that you have a mind of your own and that you use it. But how would you like to be told a dozen times an evening that first this one and then that one does not always agree with you? What kind of cocktail party chit-chat is that, for heaven's sake? It is enough to drive a man to drink, and it just happens that on the occasions one hears it most, drinks are usually available.

You can see then where such a pleasantry leads.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE STAGE

TRAGEDY AND THE SAVAGED PIETIES

AT THIS CRISIS of its fortunes, the cruel mischance of a newspaper strike has denied the Phoenix Theatre what would surely have been public praise of the deepest resonance. For their venture of Mr. Graham Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory,* in a stage adaptation by Messrs. Pierre Bost and Denis Cannan, is a theater event of the first magnitude. To the audience one may conceive of as spiritually available, it will speak with that dark eloquence and private passion which are ever Mr. Greene's singularities. To the curious and the idle, to that aspect of all of us which seeks distraction from distraction by distraction, it must seem an alien thing indeed, apocalyptic and hostile, yet irresistible in its tragic velocity, and glamorous even in the secret strain of nobility which colors its polluted world.

I share the judgment, so persuasively drawn by Mr. Morton Dauwen Zabel in *Craft and Character in Modern Fiction,* that of all Mr. Graham Greene's fictions, *The Power and the Glory* alone is invested with "a really convincing quality of legend," the one least vexed by that hazard of reconciling "religious and didactic premises to the realistic and empirical principles of the novel form." We concede authority to its fable—this necessary collision of vocations, the priest's and the lieutenant's, their ritual enactment of commitments beyond time—not so much because of the charismatic montages of squalor and decay, nor again because a steely voice is telling its litany of treachery at our ear, but rather out of a sense that reverberant symbols have been found for a translation of experience into poetic imagination. To be sure, the poetry is less that of language than of situation, and it is obvious what solicitation it may offer to the adapter.

Messrs. Cannan and Bost have kept for "The Power and the Glory" its essential character and trajectory as passion drama, necessarily sacrificing diversity of place and personage, intermittently motif—the poignant counterpoint of the fidelity and wonder of children is gone—to the new form. Certain passages have been expanded to an ambitious dramatic density—that scene, for one, in which the officials greedily drain the last of the priest's wine, is without peer as a tense interlude—and others sadly foreshortened: omission of the final prison meditations is distinctly a loss. Still, the play has logic, momentum and great security on its own terms. If it were not irrelevant, it would be possible to claim for it more theatrical impulse, unequivocal domination and wholeness of imagination than either of Mr. Greene's own two works for the theater.

Mr. Stuart Vaughan's temperateness has again given the production its quality and carrying power. It is a source of complaint in some quarters, this moderation of Mr. Vaughan's; I might wish, myself, to see it employed more frequently in the director's approach to complex work; at the very least, it implies a humility and absence of egotism much to be commended. The theater problem in *The Power and the Glory,* as in that of any adaptation, must be to find the physical and pictorial equivalent for what is expressed in the novel by image, sensibility and comment. Mr. Vaughan's production, its décor and lighting, its rhythm and animation and speech, aim only at a suggestive line of Mexican substance, not an actuality: wholly an admirable choice, I should say, for if one kind of reality, that of convincing surfaces, is sacrificed, another—the vital reality of spiritual presence—is enforced. It is understood, I imagine, that the labor which would give this stage translation of *The Power and the Glory* an ineffaceable unity of style, an austere texture as seamless and compelling as that of the novel, is not to be had in our theater, with its pressures of haste, lack of culture and, not incidentally, impoverished ideas of alien racial life. Mr. Vaughan's straightforward statement, because it is the least distracting mode, I find the most satisfactory.

Among a multitude of players, Mr. Eric Berry holds with unfailing precision the pinched, laconic Greene tone, and Mr. Jerry Stiller, whose supple talent has allowed him to revivify exhausted motifs of character portraiture (Shakespearean clowns, for instance) endows the mestizo with a feral, fawning equivocation profoundly disturbing. As one force in the drama equation—the flinty, dapper Lieutenant, with his "belief in a cooling universe," and his heart which speaks at the muzzle of a gun—Mr. Robert Geiringer subtly misses. The difficulty is a failure neither of sensibility nor technique, but is due rather to the intractable nature of these figures of absolute will, who carry with them on the page their bleak light and authority of obsession, but whose very abstraction imposes a cruel weight on the actor who would give them embodiment. The imagination, alas, is ever more potent than the eye, and nothing eludes the grasp more fleetly than the metaphysical.

In the situation of Mr. Fritz Weaver, who plays the whiskey priest, quite other and triumphant an effect has been achieved, and Mr. Weaver, perhaps because the emotional substance of his role is all flux and torment, conveys an immense, broken reality. This is not Mr. Graham Greene's shabby, anonymous cipher, harried by grace, but a personage of baroque spiritual dignity, brought through labyrinthine ways to the last extremity of vision. As such, he is rendered with tragic pathos, strange elegance, the sanctity of a thing apart, and profound interior tumult. Indeed, it is this pres-

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sure, monstrous, working outward from within, the cost of which we sense in the reach and stress and labor of the actor's soul, that makes of his performance a touchstone in Mr. Weaver's secure and expanding art.

About the event of "The Power and the Glory," whatever its fortune—though I have seen nothing more powerful all season—one aspect must surely be singular: this presence in our theater of what Mr. Stark Young once despaired: that is, "a truly Catholic source, profoundly searched." How its fable and its truths—so somber, so austerely eschatological, paradoxes of dark joy and comfortless mystique—how these may savage the humanistic pieties, who shall say? If Mr. Greene's Christianity—which is to say, in the instance of "The Power and the Glory," Christianity—seems again the scandal it ever is, and insupportable to some, then I suggest the application of modes of tragic understanding to this work: it will be seen, after but a mild speculation, how richly, and with what a fresh persuasion and complexity, Mr. Greene has restored the form in its old and terrible pity. *(At the Phoenix.)* RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

MANY THINGS TO MANY PEOPLE

THE UNPREDICTABLE French, who have been sending over a plethora of mystery thrillers and racy Brigitte Bardot items, are now represented on our screens by two quite different films —films which, although they do not show church people in a favorable light, are definitely of a religious nature. While the films have French dialogue with English sub-titles, both of them, like so many movies today, are international with contributions coming from several countries. "He Who Must Die" was handsomely photographed on the island of Crete where the action takes place. Its French and Greek cast was directed by Jules Dassin, an American working in France lately; and its plot stems from a novel by Nikos Kazantzakis, a Greek poet whose recently published sequel to *The Odyssey* is receiving considerable acclaim.

Although seemingly simple, the story in "He Who Must Die" is quite complicated. In 1921, with Crete under Turkish rule, the people of a Cretan village get the Agha's permission to stage a Passion Play. Pope Gregoris, the head of the village church, assigns the various roles: a tongue-tied shepherd (Pierre Vaneck) as Christ; the rich man's son (Maurice Ronet) as John; a widow with a fast reputation (Melina Mercouri) as Mary Magdalene; etc. The only one objecting to his assignment is the mean and jealous villager given the role of Judas. As the days pass, however, these simple folk take their roles seriously and their lives and attitudes begin to parallel those of the figures they will portray. They are given greater opportunity to display their goodness and charity when refugees (from a neighboring village destroyed by the Turks) arrive and plead for help. These people led by their Pope (Jean Servais) are cruelly rejected by Pope Gregoris and the other village elders who selfishly fear that their village will meet with disfavor from the Turks. The cynical Agha (who has already said that Allah made a mistake when he made the first Christian, so Allah made some more Christians and soon they were fighting) tries to wash his hands of their whole affair. The village elders, however, force him into action, and the shepherd, who has now lost his stammering, leads his Passion Play fellows in the revolt against the elders and insists on helping the downtrodden refugees. Pope Gregoris aims his anger at the shepherd, who is captured and killed. It is then that the people realize that the shepherd stood for "what is best in us—and the best cannot die."

"He Who Must Die" will mean many things to as many people. Those who want to see the analogy to the Passion Play, with the Turkish Pilate and the Greek Caiaphas, can do so. Audiences who find in Shaw's "St. Joan" an argument against organized religion may find it again here. But few will deny that Jules Dassin has made a fascinating and moving film. Its analogies may be somewhat pretentious at times; but the characters themselves are disturbingly real; and the film as a whole, with its engrossing story, good performances and stark settings, provides a thought-provoking and enriching experience. It might well have been called, like the novel on which it is based, *The Greek Passion.*

THE OTHER import from France also screams out against injustice and lack of charity. "Witches of Salem" is based on Arthur Miller's play, "The Crucible," and once you get used to these austere people of 1692 Massachusetts speaking in French, you will find it an absorbing film. In writing his good script, Jean-Paul Sartre follows Miller's story closely, but adds to it considerably and gives the whole piece political implications that Miller only suggested. Actually the film's two hours and twenty minutes' running time is too long; and while the movie has great power, some of its effect is lessened through over-telling its story.

On the whole Raymond Rouleau's direction is good, especially his guidance of Yves Montand in the lead role of the erring farmer who becomes the victim of intolerance and mass hysteria, and of Simone Signoret as the frigid wife who later begs his forgiveness. These two are superb in their final scenes together. But Director Rouleau allowed Mylene Demongeot, in the role of the vengeful maidservant, to overact both as the

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lustful slut and the "bewitched" victim who accuses the wife of the man she loves. The Puritan fathers are not only superstitious, intolerant and narrow but also pretty stupid to be taken in by her. This is not enough, however, to spoil the total effect of "Witches of Salem"

The picture's most forceful scenes are those near the end when the farmer, to save himself from execution, decides to confess to the churchmen about dealings with the devil—scenes that will once again remind viewers of "St. Joan." But like Joan, the farmer refuses to lie. Arthur Miller's theme, concentrating on the dignity of man, strangely enough works out better as a movie than as a play; and in this case it is a very well-made movie. Claude Renoir's beautiful black-and-white photography and Georges Auric's musical score add much to the vividness of "Witches of Salem."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"NUCLEAR POLICY"

Cheshire, Conn.

TO THE EDITORS: In your recent editorial, "Nuclear Policy" [Nov. 28], you generally favored Thomas E. Murray's position on nuclear armament which, loosely stated, is that the idea of massive retaliation is a perilous illusion and that our armament policy should be geared to the development and stockpiling of kiloton nuclear weapons for use in "limited" military engagements.

The common argument against fighting "limited" engagements with conventional weapons is of course that the manpower and economy of the West cannot compete with Communism on the conventional battlefield. I have not yet heard this contention validly explained. The use of small atomic weapons in "limited" engagements demands change in arms, equipment and particularly in tactics. These changes necessarily weaken our ability to fight a non-atomic engagement and more or less commit us to fight any engagement with nuclear weapons.

Can we assume that atomics once used on the battlefield will be confined there? Can we define the battlefield or the upper limits of the destructive power to be used on it? Is not the employment of atomics in a limited war a most insidious form of "brinkmanship"? Is not, once the first atomic is used, the transition from kiloton to megaton only a question of when? How long will it take, once a low-yield atomic is fired at a company-size target in a mud village, before a multi-megaton missile decimates a modern city containing a corps or army? Is the use of kiloton nuclear weapons in a limited engagement "a rational armament policy?" Rather than gamble on the hope of confining atomics to the battlefield, is it not more rational to fight limited engagements with conventional weapons and maintain a clean line of demarcation between nuclear and conventional warfare?

It is possible that in a conventional war after some bloodletting the combatants, like two school boys with blackened eyes and torn lips, will call it quits and go home rather than using lethal weapons in a fight to the death. It is probable that once the first low kiloton weapon is used you are in a fight to the death, the death of mankind.

An engagement with conventional weapons and one in which atomics, no matter how small, are employed are and must be kept separate and distinct operations. Granted that a man killed by a rifle bullet is just as dead as the man killed by a kiloton weapon, the degree of destructive potential between the two methods is so far apart that to combine or confuse them is utterly unrealistic and utterly fatal.

Conventionally armed field-forces must of course be backed by other forces with battlefield as well as long-range megaton delivery systems. Not to have this force is an invitation to atomic blackmail. However, this strategic force, as I call it for want of a better name, must be kept separate in responsibility and command from the tactical forces for the same reason that we don't combine the football team with the rifle team for the big game.

If we arm our field-forces with "limited" atomics it makes the decision to employ them too simple, it introduces much grey into a picture that must be kept black and white. Atomics, no matter what their capability, must only be committed when there is no other alternative, when we have passed the point of no return, when it is unequivocally decided that the issue demands that we be willing to assume responsibility heretofore seen as a prerogative of God alone, the destruction of the world.

WILLIAM E. KENNEDY, JR.

"SPACE YEAR I"

Newport, R. I.

TO THE EDITORS: I am very sorry indeed to have misrepresented Mr. Herzfeld in my letter in your October 24th issue. My only guide was his original article, and this I judged against the general background of contemporary writing on space travel. But I am glad to learn that our points of view are so much closer than I had thought, and I agree that what is behind what is left of our disagreement is the problem of technological progress.

Mr. Herzfeld writes: "It seems to me that man is entering a new epoch of human history. . . . This epoch will probably be highly technological. It will also be completely pagan and inhuman unless Christians can

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work out for themselves a better theology about progress. Such a theology is already emerging . . . " and he mentions the names of a few theologians who have concerned themselves with it.

I agree heartily that what the world needs is a "better theology about progress" though I would rather call it "a more theological attitude toward progress." By this I mean, as Mr. Herzfeld must also mean, a study which has theology as its formal object and technology as its material object. We cannot expect any practical results from making theology the material object and technology the formal. We cannot study theology from the point of view of technology, for that would mean the attempt to modify divine truth to fit a creation of man. It is for this reason that I feel that our "better theology about progress" must be chiefly the work of laymen and laywomen in the world of production, rather than of the popes, cardinals, and theologians to whom Mr. Herzfeld refers. We need their work too, but we can hardly expect a largely non-Catholic world to let its policies be guided by the recommendations of Catholic theologians.

But any man of good will who seriously believes in God can ask himself such a question as: "What is God's will as to man's place in nature We may presume that God does not want us to live as did our ancestors in the stone age, and also that he has not planned for us an evolution into a 'Brave New World.' Somewhere between these extremes there must be an environmental type which is most favorable for the working out of man's supernatural destiny. About where are we to look for this mean between extremes?"

If serious believers asked themselves this question, and acted on the best answer they could give it, with regard to their own calling or profession, we might be on the road to a more theological attitude toward progress. The dairy farmer, for instance, should ask himself what type of cow he should breed for. On either hand is an extreme—the undomesticated cow of the primitive forests who has no milk to spare for man even if he could get it, and the overbred high producer of our times who breaks down under the strain of an unnatural production. God is benevolent to man; what does He wish him to do in this matter for his own

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good? This is not a question for popes and cardinals but for intelligent, theologically-minded cattle breeders.

This one example must serve for the millions of questions that must be seriously asked by millions of professional men, experts in their own technical and technological fields, if we are to tame and Christianize progressive technology. And yet, if we do not succeed in this, the epoch which we are entering will be completely pagan and inhuman.

But improbable as any other future than this may appear, we cannot allow ourselves to despair, or leave any work undone or any word unsaid that may affect the enormous issues even in the tiniest way. We must try to help those who work for a theological attitude to our technical problems, and oppose those forces that work against a theological attitude.

Of those that help are a number of writers, and high up among these is Mr. C. S. Lewis. Mr. Herzfeld's remark that "The dichotomy Lewis strikes between the 'good' medieval-type 'Christian' and the power-mad (even possessed) scientist is a false one, and obscures the real problems," seemed, and seems, to me erroneous, and worth a protest, and it was my protest that started this correspondence. Besides the writers there are the ecologists, and the biologists with an ecological turn of mind. These men also are appalled at the waste and destruction in which progressive man is indulging, and by means of which he is apparently hastening humanity to destruction. Because Mr. Lewis and the ecologists are working together for a theological approach to this problem I cited them with approval in my letter of October 24th.

On the other side, the destructive forces which militate against "the theology about technology," we have the uncritical progressivism of the space travel enthusiasts. Whoever these people are they can be expected to give no help to theological studies, but rather to distract attention from those studies. This, I believe, is the chief ground of objection of the non-enthusiasts to the enthusiasts. When we are faced with problems of such enormous proportions as we are today, speculative activities which on a small scale might be innocent assume the character of obstructions. We might almost say that those who are not with us are against us.

The whole matter might be put in philosophical rather than theological terms. God distinguished man from the other animals by giving him the faculties of intelligence and will. As a fallen creature he tends not to use these faculties. When he does not use them he gets into trouble. A truly philosophical view of life helps him to analyze his trouble. He can see (if he will), for example, that all technology (whether that of Paeleolithic, classical, medieval, eighteenth-century, or twentieth-century man) is a means to an end, and cannot be an end in itself. Those who turn technological progress into a religion are thus seen to be making a serious error. A related error is to divorce the transcendental attributes from one another, and glorify a *pure* science which knows nothing of use and goodness, a *pure* music which has nothing to do with the problems of human society, and a *pure* painting which has no message. The transcendentals must by definition co-exist, and if we assume that they do not, and take pride in their divorce, we must expect that science and the arts will turn on us as destructive forces.

What I mean by the religion of progress is not something innocent and neutral which the Church can modify, humanize, and spiritualize. It is a false god, and we worship it at our peril.

GRAHAM CAREY.

REPLY

Williamsburg, Va.

TO THE EDITORS: Mr. Carey still interprets too freely what I write. That is his privilege, but it widens the gap between us.

I do *not* mean by "theology about progress" what Mr. Carey says I "must" mean, namely a theology of technology. Technology is only one factor in human progress, and not even the most essential one. Other factors are progress in knowledge, in experience, and in insight. All of these must be faced.

This theology must be developed by the cooperation of many persons having widely diverse backgrounds and specialties. I am not one to underrate the essential contributions of laymen to this process, but am convinced that professional theologians must play a considerable role. I am pleased and relieved to note that they are beginning to do so.

Why is it that the problems of animal husbandry are so frequently put forward as examples of theological thinking about progress? Only lack of contact with the real problems can explain such extreme simplicism. I am writing from a meeting which is examining the role of government in scientific and technological progress in a free society. We have deeper problems than dairy

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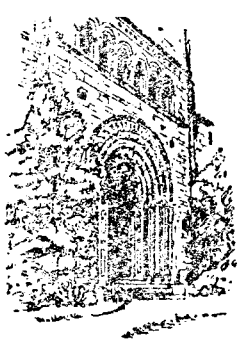

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farming to contend with, and also more complex ones. I have also yet to meet here a starry-eyed "Brave New Worlder."

C. S. Lewis has written some wonderful books, but his views of the problem of progress are deeply inadequate. Mr. Deasy has discussed this point admirably in these pages.

The controversy between Mr. Carey and myself has old roots and will continue for a long time. I find it therefore painful that Mr. Carey assumes a rhetorical position from which he seems to excommunicate those who disagree with him. It is the only objectionable aspect of an exchange which has perhaps contributed in a small way to the formulation of a theology about progress which we need so much.

C. M. HERZFELD.

With the publication of this final exchange of letters between Mr. Carey and Mr. Herzfeld, we must consider the controversy closed in our pages.

—THE EDITORS.

BOOKS

The Great Divide in Modern Civilization

THE SEARCH. By C. P. Snow. Scribner's. $3.95.

By MAX COSMAN

IN THE order of C. P. Snow's works, *The Search* has a unique place. It succeeds a pair of apprentice efforts, *Death Under Sail* and *New Lives for Old,* which no doubt owe something to examples set them in their day by Arthur Conan Doyle and H. G. Wells. And it precedes *Strangers and Brothers*, the series of interconnected novels for which Sir Charles is famous though he still has three or more volumes to add to the seven already at hand.

The re-issue of an early work by a contemporary is bound to arouse speculation. Is a bantling, well forgotten, being foisted on us by someone grown smug with success? Or is a work, not too mediocre perhaps, being pulled out to hold our attention while something better is in progress? Neither conjecture is true for Sir Charles; he is too sound a man of affairs for the one and too critical a man of letters for the other.

The fact is that *The Search*—it has been revised of course—deserves re-publication for good enough reasons. Not only is it timely, accurate, and competent, as Nobel Prize winner I. I. Rabi indicates in an appended testimonial. It also has a significance arising out of its relationship to Sir Charles' major literary work. For taken in the gross, it is a prolegomenon to his *Strangers and Brothers* and gives a preview of such cores of thought as make that undertaking, to use his own modest characterization, "a fair mass of material" organized about "a thematic system."

Any such system, in a country in which class has always involved distinction or denigration, obviously centers about societal orderings. It is not surprising, then, that *The Search* is Sir Charles' first conscious sampling of social groups. We are introduced to representatives of England's lower middle class, university fellows, and men of science —some of them, as we know, to be much more focused on in later volumes but all to help fill the human scene with a normal complement of frustration and achievement.

Hard upon this "sense of social fact," in Lionel Trilling's phrase, comes Sir Charles' concern with personal effectuation. This is admirably represented in *The Search* by Arthur Miles' change of loyalty from science which is collective to human ties that are individual. In parallel change we have his passage in affection—a touch of symbolism here—from Audrey the half-goddess to Ruth who is more than that. In both presentations, it should be noted, lies a conviction of prime importance to the author: only those who deal honestly with themselves have any hope of true satisfaction.

Such considerations of man as a figure in society and as a figure to himself fuse in Sir Charles' specialty, his flair for projecting manipulations of power. Spectator and spectacle in him collaborate as early as at this stage to give his portrayal a nature second to none. His account of Miles, Austin, Constantine, et al, maneuvering on the question of where to attach their Institute surely belongs with the best he has done in *Strangers and Brothers.*

But vindicated as *The Search* is in its themes, and, one is tempted to go on, in its characters (isn't the noted Lewis Eliot but Arthur Miles in a lawyer's gown?), it has a particular validity in its intent. Recent articles by Sir Charles show that for him, no less than for Arthur Koestler, the big issue in the late 50's is to link scientists with people outside science. "We are living," writes Sir Charles in the note to our book, "in the middle of two cultures which have scarcely any contact at all—the traditional non-scientific culture and an up-and-coming scientific one. They are startlingly different, not only in their intellectual approach, but even more so in their climate of thought and their moral attitudes. This divide exists not only in the U.S. and Great Britain but all over the Western world."

Call it hortatory or pedagogic of Sir Charles, he wants to do away with the division and *The Search* is his contribution to that end. His story of scientists certainly leaves no doubt as to what the new men of "pointer-readings" are. Scrupu-

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lously documented, as in a top-drawer laboratory report, they appear before us in professional and personal factuality. We see their focused youth, their laborious maturity, their selflessness and egotism too—Miles' coldness to his parents, for example, is sufficiently unpleasant to remind us of Meursault's in Camus' existential thriller.

But given the whole—the proofs, the figures, the charts, and the diagrams so to speak—what strikes us as odd is that the exposition is shot through with terms like "visitations," "saint," "immortality," "at one with God," "the unity of things," "the final collective faith." Are these not the affective vocables of a belief in the Unobservable? If this be so, and it is so, what does Sir Charles have in mind, or at heart, when he uses them to describe a state of being given over to the observable only? Can it be that for him the ultimates of science intersect somewhere with much more ancient ultimates still?

A First-Rate Person

AMY LOWELL. By Horace Gregory. Thomas Nelson & Sons. $5.

By JAMES B. STRONKS

AMY LOWELL would hardly seem to rate another book-length study, especially in view of S. Foster Damon's definitive (if partisan) volume of 1935, an eight-hundred-page, day-by-day documentation of her career. Horace Gregory's "interpretive historical essay" pretty much re-tells a familiar tale, except perhaps for its diagnosis of the literary scrimmage and infighting when Amy Lowell first swung her formidable weight into capturing and promoting the frail imagist impulse led by H.D. and the young Ezra Pound.

Though he is knowledgeable about all this, Mr. Gregory, who has himself been over much of this ground before in his *History of American Poetry, 1900-1940,* does not say very much that is new, nor does he say it particularly well; and in the interests of juicy book-making he gets side-tracked rather often in irrelevant anecdote and literary legend. But fortunately his "portrait of the poet in her time" deals mainly with Amy Lowell, and not with her verse, for while it was of course second-rate poetry, she was a first-rate person.

The book begins to speak for itself when it inventories the literary situation just prior to the revival of 1912, when it touches on Amy Lowell's eagerness to be on the inside of things among the bright young poets in London, and when it tells of her feeling of inferiority and resentment before her major obstacle —Ezra Pound, his superior talent and discrimination. Ezra she could not cope with, and as he saunters on from Imagism into Vorticism, Pound crowds her out of her own story for pages at a time—and rightly so, for he was then perhaps more important to her career than she herself was. But in time she strenuously established herself as the organizer and angel for all the vers librists whom she could marshall in the voluminous wake of her skirts.

As self-appointed boss and hornblower for the Imagist wing of the New Poetry from about 1912 to her death, Amy Lowell sublimated her hefty virgin drives into a hard-headed direction worthy of her family's score of cotton mills and banks. Fully exploiting her power as heiress of the Boston Lowells (cousin to James Russell and sister to Harvard's president), she set up friendly reviews of her own books (which sold about 7,000 each), poured fearsome energy into placing fellow poets' poems and editing co-operative free-verse anthologies, and, coached by her personal companion, the ex-actress Ada Dwyer Russell, became a forceful, and always well-publicized, platform reader. ("Well? Clap or hiss, I don't care which; but do something!")

Baronially established at "Sevenels" with her Constables and Whistlers and her squad of secretaries, Amy Lowell's day was as distinctive as her working methods. After shepherding her seven slobbering sheepdogs about the lawn before dinner (guests were provided with protective towels, but Maxwell Bodenheim, slow on his feet for a poet, got furrily roughed up before he could fight his way to the front door), or breathing happily in her gardens while puffing a Manila *claro* (10,000 more were cached upstairs), or reverently perusing her collection of Keatsiana, the world's finest, she got down to the manufacture of her verses in mid-evening and worked hard through the night (in rooms whose mirrors were swathed against the reflection of her cruelly mortifying corpulence). A drift of manuscript ready for the morrow's typist, she retired before dawn to sleep until mid-afternoon, whereupon she returned to the battle reports of her campaign for the New Poetry and to the revision of the new typescripts.

With such a schedule, she published no fewer than seven hundred poems in about a decade. But her big body finally failed, and hard upon the high-pressured production of her two-volume life of Keats, she suddenly died of a stroke in March of 1925 at fifty-one, having, amid her wealth and status, killed herself with overwork.

Mythomania

MANUEL THE MEXICAN. By Carlo Coccioli. Translated from the French by Hans Konigsberger. Simon & Schuster. $4.50.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

EVERY GOOD FRIDAY in Tlaltenalco, near Mexico City, the drama of Calvary is reenacted in a time-honored ceremony: a condemned criminal is chosen as Christ and he is led in a motley procession to a hill where he is nailed to the cross. "The wave of pity that surrounds him is why Jesus is Mexican." The mutilated body is left hanging alone until sundown: if he is alive then the man is pardoned and given a reward.

In his twentieth year, the year 1954, Manuel Orea Ayopac becomes a Christ of Tlaltenalco, as

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ineluctably as he had journeyed from his home three years earlier on his strange and exalted mission. His father had been murdered, in revenge for a murder he himself had committed, shortly before Manuel's birth, which took place in a mule cart just outside the ancient pueblo of Tepoztlàn, to which his mother, who had run away with the father, was returning. In the words of the author—who avows that almost none of this is invented and who rather enjoys dwelling on the "unutterable"—"Tepoztlàn with its august height is the juncture of earth and light; its blood, Indian with its enigmatic logic, is proud but not rebellious."

Here Manuel receives a Mexicanist education from his learned great-uncle, Don Isidro, an erstwhile revolutionary. One day the boy overhears a friend of the venerable man declaring that the old Aztec idols can really be identified with the celestial figures of Catholicism, that the Lord Tepozteco and Christ are one and the same divinity, that there is but one Mexican Time. Manuel becomes haunted by these words, and months later it is this very message he announces he has received from the lips of Tepozteco himself, who has appeared to him in a vision enjoining him to go and preach the revelation.

In all the village but two people —his mother and a shabby peddler —doubt him; yet when he sets out it is the peddler, a Catholic *Cristero,* who is his only companion. No earth is so thirsty for blood as our holy Mexican earth, the *Cristero* tells Manuel during his savage accounts of the part that blood has played in the conversion of this land they are traveling—from village to village, from shrine to shrine; when the fantastic peddler dramatically bares his own scars of persecution to Manuel, the boy is suddenly overwhelmed with love, which he soon discovers to be too real, and he steals away one night and goes on alone.

One day Manuel finds himself in Mexico City, hungry, without a centavo; he meets a substantial New England spinster who opens her home and heart to the untamed little prophet. The author is pleased to name her Miss Hawkins and to suggest her intellectual credit by permitting her to assert that her first serious lessons were "Franklin, Lincoln and others from that group."

By this time Signor Coccioli, who has been threatening to pull a sort of *Faux-Monnayeurs*—the logbook of the novel within the novel —jumps in with both feet and confounds a perfectly clear case of coincidence. He had until then been satisfied to stand off all the many queries readers might raise with a breezy *quién sabe?* (Mexico, you know, where the light may be more livid but where the night is also more impenetrable.) He had narrated his "mystery" through a kind of series of animated ex votos, some moving, many colorful.

The climax to Manuel's sketchy story has already been related in the opening chapter, and the mere collage to which the story is reduced can hardly bolster its flimsy structure or make the dénouement more coherently "inexorable." What it does is give the author a chance to allude to several of his previous novels and to round out his tour of the Republic with some hasty shots of the main attractions left out while the camera was busy with Manuel and his epic of all Mexico. This is not to imply that it had not already succumbed to every tempting descriptive detour. It is all a progression of detours, of disconnected if often vividly evoked images, the pompous yet dolorous spectacle of a mythomaniac attempt to coax an epic-size novel out of a whirl of choleric travel impressions.

Colette's Young Self-Image

CLAUDINE IN PARIS. By Colette. Translated by Antonia White. Farrar, Straus. $3.75.

By ALICE SAXON

AFTER *Claudine at School* we are treated to *Claudine in Paris,* where Colette's young self-image perceives the world with a cold, laughing eye, and a thoroughly charming narcissism now and then warmed with sudden anxieties. The narration has Colette's perfection of knowledgeability and wit, for all its rushing purposefully to a finale of obvious triumphs; it seems, however, a shorter, less valuable accounting of life than *Claudine at School,* which had a leisure, and the richness of a native habitat, taking in a whole countryside and a large cast of grotesque compatriots who can not be suppressed even now—"that great gawk Annais" and "my co-first communicant Claire" still figure prominently in Claudine's thoughts. (Colette has a curious way of never varying the descriptive adjective: Annais is referred to a dozen times but never without the word "gawk," nor Claire except as "my co-first communicant," and the effect, more than amusing, is of a flat, inflexible scorn or tenderness of youthful judgment.) Much of *Claudine in Paris* is in fact given over to retrospect, a deep nostalgia for school days and the woods of Montigny; the move to Paris, to accommodate her father's scholarly activities in the field of malacology (grubs), plummets Claudine into depression and a long illness, from which she emerges pale and shorn of her hair—a slender, curly-haired shepherd boy, as she does not fail to note.

This inspires Colette's typically ingenious central image; Claudine pays a visit to an aunt in whose parlor she meets for the first time her (Claudine's) nephew, an exquisite, petulant creature of her own age, whose graceful resemblance to a lovely girl is as striking as Claudine's shepherd-boy look. They are properly fascinated and suspicious, and eventually fall into an agreeable companionship, in the course of which Colette chooses to contrast the essential naivete, the impatient virginal scorn of Claudine with the preoccupied decadence of young Marcel. (Half-anxiously, and

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not a little wickedly, Claudine elaborates upon her fairly uneventful school girl affairs to satisfy Marcel's greedy curiosities.) There is much nibbling of chocolate and biscuits in Claudine's room, trips to the tailor to have Claudine's new siut fitted under Marcel's expert advice (much to the distraction of the fitter who cannot figure these two out), some letter-stealing and finally some eye-scratching, their friendship being at best a temporary pastime, doomed not to survive the meeting of Claudine and Marcel's widower-father.

This gentleman very kindly takes Claudine and his exasperating son on instructive trips to the theater (during which the reader is given lively caricatures of Parisian theater critics of the day), but Marcel inevitably removes himself from the company, rather than take off a certain crêpe-de-chine cravat that his father will not tolerate. There is nothing left for him but to go up in a poof of infuriated smoke as Claudine the woman emerges and triumphs notably. Her "uncle" Renault, whom she marries, is handsome, wise, wordly, lovable, in short, everything that Claudine, who never for a moment loses the absolute support of full-fledged heroineship, ought to have.

If there is a big helping of slapdash in all of this, it is all the more remarkable that there is not a detail which errs, scarcely a moment in which poise and wit are lost. There is, too, a wistful hint of Colette herself in the image of young Claudine, who, after she has amused us thoroughly with her sly observations, reveals her great need for something stronger, more demanding and less fatuous, than anything she had discovered in her early surroundings.

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An Accomplished Comic Writer

THE VISITORS. By Mary McMinnies. Harcourt. $4.95.

By NORA MAGID

WHEN Mary McMinnies, who was born in India of British parents, was at school in England, she was exposed, she says, in an interview with Milton Waldman, to a nagging German master. His message, constantly bawled out at her, was "Be *ganz objectiv,* child, *ganz objectiv!*" That she has absorbed his admonition is evident in both her novels, *The Flying Foxes,* and *The Visitors.* She has a wonderful faculty for detachment. Rare is the lady novelist who does not dump her psychological lot in willy-nilly with that of her heroine, but here is one set apart by the coolness of her wit and the clarity of her observation. In her bemused contemplation of human folly, she is a true comic writer.

No one in *The Visitors* is particularly attractive. Milly Purdoe, the central character, is a self-romanticizing fool, who consciously models herself on Emma Hamilton and Scarlett O'Hara, but who actually approximates an Emma Bovary *manquée.* The irony implicitly here evades her, because to be even this Emma strikes her as desirable. Milly is decently intelligent, Milly is more than pretty, Milly is totally calculating and miserable. At thirty-three, she has a handsome, successful husband and two charming children, and she is drowning in self-pity. All she thinks about is the distraction that never materializes. "Time on one's hands, and yet with each second that passed, less and less time: look at it that way, and there was no time at all. At my back, I always hear—that, certainly. And what was she doing about it? Just standing there, gazing out of a window. Like women all over the world, how often she had glimpsed them behind lace curtains, leaning on balconies, crouched in the gloom screened by hideous plants—all over the world, they were doing it now, and she one of them—gazing out of windows, wishing, waiting for something to happen. Whilst time passed."

Abe, the American newspaperman, on whom she hopefully focuses her "pussycat smile," is tough and jaundiced, but not above commiseration. This he says, indicating the iron curtain capital in which her husband is a British foreign officer, should be operation stag. It would save a heap of bother not to have the ladies around. For the ladies, when thrown on their slender resources, cultivate their penchant for trouble. They yearn not only for men not their husbands, but also for contraband property. One after another, they succumb to the lure of the black market. For a few trinkets, Milly jeopardizes everything, and comes too late to grasp the implication of Abe's wry claim that while she is so busy searching the sky for portents, she is missing the treasures at her feet. It is Milly's naive desire to be happy; when she errs, like Margery in the earlier McMinnies book, she rebukes herself in diminutives for being

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"naughty"—"a word she rather enjoyed as applied to herself or her actions; entirely acceptable, implying femininity, coquetry, innocent misdemeanors, to be forgiven with a loving kiss." Milly is headed for trouble and she finds it.

Another fascinating and dreadful —if more lovable—woman is Sophie Bielska, a dispossessed aristocrat, obsessed with Anglomania. She knows what she knows from the school stories of Angela Brazil, from whom she has picked up her terrible vocabulary—*crumbs, crikey, brick*. Sophie alone does not in some way use Milly. She is in a sense Milly's victim, though the happier for it.

Miss Raven, the nanny, is a marvelously mad creature, whose prim aspect in dowdy felt hat and conventional tweed suit belies the passionate heart that clacks within. As it transpires, she is both a pathological liar and a nymphomaniac. Olga Wragg is a latter-day Madame Defarge, biding her time not by knitting, but by following religiously the prescriptions of the fashion magazines she imports. Decked out in outlandish makeup and lounging pants too tight to lounge in, she plays at concocting an epic French novel while waiting in the wings to knife her superiors.

Two other important women are the Princess, a sleazy operator on the black market, splendidly seedy and flamboyant; and Gisela, a true child of the people's revolution. The men are less substantial. There are some colorful minor characters, like Ludo, the overbred decadent aristocrat, and Schwelling, the American functionary, whose "air of patronage hinted not so much at cooperation as at the ultimate assimilation of the Foreign Office by the State Department." Larry, the British husband, is a stick, dull, dedicated to duty and propriety. Abe, the journalist, is another stock figure. Actually, as it turns out, the date Milly has had from the beginning is with someone else, a most unlikely and unprepossessing candidate, a scraggy starveling, emotionally and physically, who takes a dim view of everything, Milly and her offspring included.

Mary McMinnies has a talent for elaborating on the not totally unexpected with particular dryness. She is also an accomplished raconteur. Her people, Dickensian in detail and scope, operate within a long and complex plot, in the course of which everyone and everything is exposed: the British, the Americans, the Communists; men, women, and children alike. Humbug is stripped away with an unsentimental vigor that is above all surprisingly benign. In short, this is an engrossing and substantial novel that is fun to read.

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